

St Bartholomew CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120153
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	313534
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Bujdoso
Headteacher	Vivienne A James
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Willowcroft Warwick Avenue Quorn Quorn Loughborough LE12 8HQ
Telephone number	01509 412250
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils live in the village of Quorn, although some come from further afield through parental choice. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the number identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from a White British background. There are both mixed age and single age classes across the school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that helps pupils to achieve well both socially and academically. Outstanding pastoral support ensures that pupils are happy, learn good values and grow into sensible and respectful members of the school community. Pupils' smiling faces demonstrate their thorough enjoyment of school and their eagerness to learn. The school provides a wide range of visits and visitors that enrich the otherwise satisfactory curriculum and these help pupils to develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Pupils' behaviour is good and they take responsibility well. The way in which they organise their own fund raising projects is particularly impressive and reflects their strong commitment to helping others.

Good teaching means that standards are well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils make good progress overall, although it is not even across the school. Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception Year, and then in Years 1 to 6, do especially well when they are taught in the single age classes. Teachers provide high quality academic support to pupils. They check regularly on pupils' learning and often provide them with good guidance to help them improve. Teachers are hard-working and are committed to doing their best for the pupils but there are occasions when work does not build well enough on pupils' differing starting points, especially in some of the mixed age classes. When this happens, the pace of learning is too slow.

The school is well led and managed. The reflective and purposeful leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the school has moved forward quickly since the last inspection. She is supported well by other senior managers and governors. Together, they have established good systems for checking how well pupils are doing and they use this information to ensure that any underachievement is tackled vigorously. The school has demonstrated in the way that it has raised standards since the last inspection that there is a good capacity to improve further.

Parents rightly value the school and they support it well by helping their children at home. Some parents raised justifiable concerns about the quality of provision in the mixed age classes and the school acknowledges that more needs to be done to improve the pace of learning in these classes. Nevertheless, most parents are very happy with the school. One parent summed up their views by writing, 'We are impressed by the all-round ethos of the school which promotes good behaviour, compassion, respect and responsibility.' This comment successfully encapsulates the key strengths of this successful school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children start school with attainment that is above average and, in the current year, they are taught in one single age class and two mixed age classes, alongside Year 1 pupils. They make satisfactory progress and, by the start of Year 1, most continue to work at or beyond the expected levels for their age. The good expectations of teachers mean that children's personal and social skills develop particularly well. For example, they quickly learn to work and play together happily. Both the quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory overall, being most effective in the single age class, where there is easy access to a large outdoor area and children get more opportunities to self-select what they are going to do and to learn through purposeful play. In all of the Reception classes, teachers are kind and caring and their sensitive support ensures that children settle quickly when they start school. Teachers work hard to plan a curriculum that meets differing needs, but in the mixed age classes there are occasions when

this is not fully achieved, and opportunities to develop skills are missed. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of what needs improving and additional training is already scheduled, but the pace of development has been adversely affected by absences amongst senior Foundation Stage staff in the last term.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all children in the Reception Year have the same opportunities to work outside, to choose from a range of activities in lessons and to learn through play.
- Ensure that teachers consistently pitch work at the right level for all pupils, especially in the mixed age classes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection and are well above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils make especially good progress in reading because they get many opportunities to read at home and at school. Although progress is good overall, it is not consistently good across the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make the best progress when they are being taught in single age classes, when differing needs are usually met well. However, there are occasions, especially in some mixed age classes, when work does not build well enough on pupils' starting points, slowing the pace of learning.

Good quality support means that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. The school is particularly successful at making sure that nearly all pupils reach nationally expected levels by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are justifiably proud of their school and the way it enables them to become responsible young citizens who are prepared well for later life. Their positive attitudes towards learning and their good rates of attendance are important factors in the success of the school. Despite the open-plan nature of some work areas, pupils work sensibly at all times and they are considerate of those working in adjoining classrooms. Pupils behave well and are polite and courteous, although occasionally some become restless when the teacher talks for too long at the start of lessons.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. From starting school in the Reception Year, pupils quickly learn to take responsibility. They contribute well to the community by writing for the village magazine and raising funds for charities. An effective school council ensures that pupils' views are heard. Councillors are currently working very conscientiously to ensure that the role of 'playground friends' is more clearly understood by their classmates. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of cultures other than their own.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and most make sensible choices about what snacks to eat at playtime. Activities such as cycling proficiency lessons help pupils to understand about how to avoid dangers outside school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn quickly in most lessons because teachers have good relationships with them and plan purposeful tasks. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to introduce new skills and to reinforce learning. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to explain their ideas to the teacher or a 'talk partner', ensuring that there is good involvement in lessons. Pupils' differing needs are generally met well but there are occasions, especially in some of the mixed age classes, where work is not always pitched at the right level for all pupils. This is especially noticeable when pupils of differing age or ability complete the same piece of written work in subjects such as science, history and geography.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well in lessons by teachers and teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is a successful focus on developing basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The school has recently developed a very detailed plan of which topics are to be taught when, but teachers' planning does not always take enough account of the needs of the differing year groups in mixed age classes. The Foundation Stage curriculum supports children's personal development well, but they do not all have access to the same good quality activities both indoors and outside.

Enrichment of the curriculum is good. Visits and visitors successfully extend pupils' experience of the wider world and help them to learn about staying safe and healthy. Pupils especially enjoy their residential visits when they say that they 'do lots of exciting things'. Pupils also like being able to learn French because 'it will help us when we start at the secondary school'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents correctly praise the outstanding way in which the school supports pupils' personal and social needs. All members of staff are deeply committed to the care of their pupils. Their very high quality pastoral support makes this a happy school where pupils are keen to do their best. Pupils are confident that they will always get help if they have any problems. There are good links with outside agencies to safeguard the well-being of pupils.

The school has developed very thorough systems for assessing pupils' progress, especially in English, mathematics and science and in all areas of learning in the Reception Year. Any pupils who are falling behind, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are identified and supported quickly and this helps to ensure that progress is good. Pupils are set targets and their work is regularly marked, although the quality of this is not consistently good across the school. Consequently, there are some missed opportunities to give pupils guidance about how to improve further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The commitment of the headteacher and senior managers to providing a secure and happy haven for all pupils, whatever their backgrounds or needs, is reflected in the calm and welcoming atmosphere in school. There is a good drive for further improvement and the school has developed good systems for evaluating the overall effectiveness of provision. This deals with a weakness from the last inspection and means that senior managers have a good understanding of what still needs developing. There is a wealth of assessment information to show pupils' progress from year to year and this is used rigorously to set challenging targets for improvement and to identify any underachievement. Consequently, pupils who are not doing well enough are quickly given the necessary support to get back on track.

Subject leaders play a valuable part in monitoring provision and helping their colleagues, although staff absence has limited the amount of support given to teachers in the Reception Year. Consequently, weaknesses in the quality of the curriculum, especially in the Reception Year, are only just being tackled and children do not all yet have equal access to the same range of activities both indoors and outside.

Governors are supportive and provide good challenge to the school. They manage the school's budget successfully, and spending is carefully prioritised so that it can have the best effect on pupils' learning.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Bartholomew CE Primary School, Quorn LE12 8HQ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly. We are very pleased that you go to a good school.

Some of the things we found out about your school.

- Generally good teaching helps you to learn new things quickly and to make good progress and to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the Reception classes settle quickly, although when working alongside Year 1 pupils they are not always given the right things to do to help them learn as quickly as they could.
- You behave well and are keen to take responsibility. The well organised school council helps you all to contribute successfully to school life.
- Visits and visitors help to make learning fun and to develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. The tag rugby in Year 6 looked great fun.
- All adults in school are extremely kind and caring and they give you good support if you are struggling with your work.
- Your headteacher, governors and teachers lead the school well and know what needs to be done to make it even better.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Make sure that children in all of the Reception classes have access to similar activities during each day, including opportunities to work outside and to learn through play.
- Make sure that teachers pitch work at the right level for all of you, especially in the mixed age classes.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by working hard and trying your best.

Best wishes

Mr M Capper Lead inspector